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JANFEB., 1959	Vol. CXLIV, No. 5

UNITY

Established 1878

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Published bimonthly except during July and August by the
Abraham Lincoln Centre
700 Oakwood Boulevard
Chicago 53, Illinois

Subscription \$2.

Single Copies 50 cents.

[&]quot;Entered as Second-Class Matter October 7, 1952, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879."

Editorial Comments

to year-end reports on CBS and NBC television.

And, again, we were impressed with the similarity and the consistency of the observers for these rival networks. A new ingredient was added this year in that both panels were more outspoken in their criticism of the administration and the failure of its foreign policy. In fact, it would appear that there is no foreign policy, only a series of unrelated, isolated, and everchanging policies.

Few nations could surmount the costly diplomatic failures in the Middle East, the Far East, and even in South America. The United States can "get by" because it is the wealthiest nation and one of the two most powerful on the earth. We agree with the intelligent observers maintained by CBS and NBC that the brinkmanship resulting from hurried reactions to crises, served like cross-court volleys from our antagonist, Russia, cannot win. The United States needs a coordinated, consistent, and determined policy which will be recognizable as a policy of peace, friendship, and concern for the welfare of all mankind.

It has become increasingly clear

that the present administration cannot provide this kind of foreign policy leadership on its own. It is imperative that there be a bipartisan approach which can utilize the genius and services of such men as Adlai Stevenson, Chester Bowles, and Hubert Humphrey.

UNITY is an independent magazine. However, it has had a long and close relationship with the Western Unitarian Conference. Your editor is a former Secretary, the executive officer, of the Western Conference. We are concerned with what happens to its future. The Joint Unitarian-Universalist Merger Commission strangely implies that merger would necessitate the redistricting of the regional areas. Their recommendation would kill the Western Unitarian Conference. The name would be used for a geographic area now only a portion of the Conference and still not descriptively accurate. If this is a part of the merger package, we do not buy it.

But this is not our only reason for questioning the advisability of merger. We have read the Commission's report, various articles, essays and sermons by both Unitarians and Universalists and in none of them have we discovered a really compelling reason to merge. In fact, we have learned that in organizational structure, historical traditions, and theological emphases, there are more contradictions than agreements. We do not think these should be forced to fuse.

In the Middle West during the past several years there has been increasing cooperation and coordination between Unitarians and Universalists. It is a type of functional merger rather than organizational merger. It arises from felt needs and desires. It is practical.

It undoubtedly would take a much longer time to achieve total merger this way but the results would be far more effective and meaningful. To yield to the emotionalized extrapolation of Brotherhood, which undergirds the movement toward merger and which in turn is a reflection of orthodox doctrines of ecumenicity, is a type of conformity which is not liberal and which may be disastrous to the liberal cause.

At the time Edith Hansen's article on "How Important Is

Freedom?" was set in type she was perfectly right in referring to Dr. Romulo Betancourt as a "onetime democratic President of Venezuela." However, on December 7th, 1958, he was again elected President for which fact both she and we are grateful. Democracies now outnumber dictatorships in the Organization of American States. It remains to be seen whether Fidel Castro will add Cuba to the growing list of democracies. He has pledged himself to do so. We hope the flush of victory will strengthen his democratic resolution.

We wish to thank Editor E. G. Lee for permission to use "America in Retrospect," by A. B. Downing, which first appeared in *The Inquirer*, the Unitarian and Free Christian Weekly published in England. *The Inquirer* is an interesting paper which provides many insights into British Unitarianism. Our guess is that American subscriptions would be approximately \$4.00 per year. If interested send subscription to *The Inquirer*, 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1., England.

"To the question whether I am a pessimist or an optimist, I answer that my knowledge is pessimistic, but my willing and hoping are optimistic."

Albert Schweitzer.

America in Retrospect*

A. B. DOWNING

EMORIES of my Transatlantic trip are so multitudinous that it is hard to know where to begin. America's combined vastness and variety is impressive. It is also confusing. I was in a constant state of wide-eyed wonder, intellectual alarm, and ecclesiastical bewilderment whilst I was there. Now that I am back again it is hard to bring order into the somewhat chaotic memories I have amassed.

The Europeans visiting the Chicago Congress travelled enormous Principal Kenworthy distances. computed that he had knocked up, by bus, air, and rail, at least 3,000 miles. That would be about an average estimate for most of us: 3,000 miles are an awful lot! We landed in Montreal, where we were entertained for an hour in the large Unitarian church - a place oozing a somewhat un-nonconformist magnificence. Its distinguished minister (Angus Cameron) -like most of the distinguished Transatlantic ministerswas, of course, away, though we heard plenty about him. If he was at all like his ministerial brethren, he was probably vacationing in some posh log cabin or delectable

It was the same at Toronto. where we were entertained for the night. The redoubtable Bill Jenkins, the minister there, was absent, but a highly competent fulltime paid superintendent of the Church School and other salaried minions were in charge. Our congregation there has a new church -if that is the right word for it -which is a very ultra-modern building indeed. Bill Jenkins stirs the local intellectual waters considerably with his Humanism and religious daring. He was quoted to me very proudly as saying that he does not care what

mountain hide-out owned and maintained out of their (to us) enormous salaries. From September to June, of course, they work very hard as public leaders and organizers in the religious field. There is no nonsense about not closing during the hot summer weather. In Transatlantic towns either lay preachers take over for the reduced congregations or the church is closed entirely, or often enough most Protestant churches close except for one or two in which "union" (interdenominational) services are held, so that the locality is not left unredeemably unchurched during the hot season.

^{*}Appeared in *The Inquirer* of September 20, 1958, and October 4, 1958. (The Unitarian and Free Christian Weekly published in London, England.)

people say about Unitarianism as long as they say something-a declared objective which apparently meets with success. Mr. Jenkins certainly sees to it that Unitarianism is regarded as something "different," and he is by no means alone in that, as we were to discover later in the U.S.A. Not all of us were happy about this hot pursuit of "difference" for its own sake. But, then, it pays dividends, and we do not live there and we might change our minds if we did! Judicious and wise comment is far from easy.

* * *

The very long journey from Montreal, via Toronto and Detroit, to Chicago was all done by bus. It was very tiring, at times, but always interesting. There were so many exciting American things to see on the way, such as their comfortable wooden houses, "motels" (\$8 per night for a double room, including bath, toilet, and TV), and Drive-In Cinemas with their huge outdoor screens, to which the entire family can be driven at night with the children safely asleep in the back of the car, and an efficient meal-service which provides anything from chewing gum to a T-bone steak. And if we became tired of watching from our seats in the bus, we could always listen to Dr. Nag's very fluent and liquid Indian baritone expiating on apparently

everything from Hegel to Hinduism; or ask Bruce Findlow to tell us about his work as a qualified Japanese interpreter during the war; or commiserate with English ladies clutching white gloves and hats for dear life in the unlikely event of their being excluded from some posh and prosperous American congregation; or talk to the Reverend and Mrs. Chris Raible, our young and quite wonderful Cicerones.

The Unitarian Churches (at Montreal, Toronto, and Detroit) we saw on our journey to Chicago were all large and prosperous. They all had premises, installations, kitchens, and classroomswhat they call "church plant"which are unbelievable on our England standards. They were equally and almost overwhelmingly hospitable to their European guests. At Toronto and Detroit we stopped for the night and were taken to private homes. Exciting indeed were the discussions next morning in the bus about where each of us had been, what rich chicken - strawberry - melon - pineapple-lettuce-tomato-grape salads we had eaten, what luxury we had nibbled at, what generous and friendly people we had met, how prosperous the local Unitarian church was.

The more human sidelights on the Chicago Congress itself would fill a very long article. I personal-

ly shall remember the conversations I had with many of the younger American ministers - all of them smart in appearance, exuding prosperity and confidence, and coping, not with the cares of sheer religious survival, but with the very different cares of success and promotional activity. Some of them seemed to have the well-trained air of professional organizers; others were more conscious of the excitements and torments of religious faith, though astounding church statistics and increasing dollar budgets never seemed to be far from their minds. Intellectually they were very mixed, as, of course, we are, but their mental discipline in the field of religious ideas is certainly different from ours. There was no obvious element of material self-sacrifice for the sake of a religious cause, as is so often the case here. They seemed to be stipend-conscious but from the point of view of increasing their comfort rather than out of a need to keep the wolf from the door. Several times I heard ministers refer to some church or other which was not doing much "business." Dollar figures came to people's lips so naturally and so easily that I often felt that a church's budget was far more important to them than its burden of truth. It was all just different from what we are used to here, and that is as

much as I dare say!

We had several services in the First Unitarian Church in Chicago, in the heart of the University area. It is a noble and massive building. I shall long remember the impressive candlelighting service on the last evening of the Congress. I shall also remember the aesthetic shock administered to my English non-conformist system during a service impressively conducted by the Minister Emeritus, Dr. Von Ogden Vogt, who is a well-known expert and experimenter in "liturgics." He began the service with prayer, each section of which was unexpectedly followed by a sort of Gregorian chant uttered by an antiphonic acolyte in the shape of a young man in a black gown. I asked Monsieur Marchal of Paris about it afterwards and with Gallic common sense he remarked, in effect, that he could not care less what any minister did during his service as long as his message was liberal! And that, I suppose, is the only right and proper Unitarian comment to make. It must certainly be said that the Americans are never frightened of novelty. Many of the ministers present also commented on the wonderfully impressive effect created by Dr. Vogt when he pronounced the benediction walking down the

aisle toward the church entrance.

One thing I shall remember with genuine English pride is the wonderfully calm and effective contribution made by Principal Kenworthy both in his sermon at the morning service he conducted and on a panel discussion which was televised from a radio studio. It was good indeed to hear him after the disturbing diversity of so much we had listened to. In America they used to talk about the "moving frontier" as colonization proceeded westwards. I feel that in American Unitarianism today that term is still relevant, though in an intellectual rather than a geographical sense. On the American Unitarian scene all sorts of strange ideas are marching forward-ideas as diverse in origin as the American race itself.

* * *

I find it difficult to say exactly what I thought of the I.A.R.F. Congress itself. The main addresses on Islam and Buddhism by distinguished representatives of those faiths told us little we could not have learnt from a good textbook. The other addresses on Christianity, Hinduism, and Judaism, were rather more personal. The most pertinent to the purpose of the Congress, and to me the most brilliant, was the one by Rabbi Freehof. But these addresses were never discussed in the groups. An address that could have been

fruitfully discussed was the one by Rabbi Freehof, but this came right at the end of the Congress, just before the culminating candlelight service. Intellectually, the six discussion groups were the most interesting feature. They gave us a good opportunity of seeing American minds at work, and that, of course, is something of an education. In the one I attended, the humanist controversy got quite an airing, and when the floor was not being monopolized by the panel, all sorts of "isms" and intellectual labels were mentioned in a way which seemed to suggest that there was more breadth than depth of thought. Americans are very fond of talking about such things as "areas of sociology," etc., in a way which left some of us rather flummoxed.

Following one of the plenary sessions, it was noised abroad in the Press that the Unitarians had solemnly decided at their Congress to stay within the bounds of Christianity. This sensational news was, the result of ardent attempts, happily defeated, to get the phrase "liberal Christianity" deleted from the I.A.R.F.'s full official title, which it must be admitted is not commonly used. Our humanist and more radical brethren seemed at times to have a certain frank (and disquieting) intolerance of anything "Christian" or traditional. They seemed more

anxious to make a new heritage than to preserve what is vital in the old one. There was often a curious lack of that ordinary friendly agreement to differ, which I have come to the conclusion is one of our English Unitarian virtues. We sometimes regard ourselves in England as very divided on ultimate religious issues, but our English Unitarianism—compared with the intellectual divisions of our American brethren—is positively monolithic!

Much of the charm and success of the Congress lay on the social side, culminating in the "Gala Farewell Dinner" in the ballroom of one of the big Chicago hotels. At the latter, speakers indulged enthusiastically in wildly irrelevant and hoary jokes, though there were some redeemingly good speeches. The high spot of the evening was a coloured T.V. star singer with an African drum under her arm, who asked us all to be more "prayerful" as we joined in one of her refrains. The one which has implanted itself in my memory ran as follows (carefully transcribed): "Bah-ee-lambo, Bongo Bongo"! I cherish that as my choicest memory. As Hurree Singh, of Greyfriars School might have said in the pages of The Magnet, "the prayerfulness was terrific"! Rumor had it that for \$500 we might have had some Red Indian dancers instead. I myself much

preferred the dark lady with the drum!

As far as one could judge, the American Unitarians are still licking their electoral wounds. The recent sharp contest for the A.U.A. presidency was often alluded to, and partisanship had by no means died down, though both the successful candidate (Dr. Dana Greeley) and the unsuccessful one (Dr. Ernest Kuebler) made every possible public attempt to distribute oil and balm. That electoral contest seems to have been a deeply troubling episode, with undercurrents irrevelant to us and perhaps beyond our comprehension. But I suppose that if we had two or more very competent candidates really competing for John Kielty's job as General Assembly Secretary, our denomination might be much more lively than some people think it is! In England we have got down so much to rock bottom that too few people are trying to do too many jobs. In America the situation seems to be reversed. I was told that at the A.U.A. Headquarters over seventy people are employed full time! Contrast that with Gordon Square!

Most of the Europeans took part in the post-Congress tour, which the Americans had most generously organized for us at no great cost to ourselves. Indeed we were helped and subsidized at

every end and turn. We travelled through the night from Chicago to Pittsburgh, where we arrived at 7 a.m., and stayed a day and a half. Our church there is a very active and influential one. The minister (Irving Murray) was away preparing for his heavy labours which would begin in the fall, but we were received by the assistant minister-an appointment which is far from being uncommon. All of us, again, made memorable contacts through the hospitality given to us in Unitarian homes.

Our next stop was Washington, a place which ten years ago had only one Unitarian church (All Souls) and now has at least five, with several other groups forming! All Souls Church is a stately building, with its white pews and pulpit, its rich premises, and highly organized offices. The death of its famous minister, Powell Davies, was a severe blow, and there was much speculation about the succession. Our reception there was particularly well managed. Washington has all the more refined attractions of a capital city, and we paid due homage at all the national shrines. All of us again received friendly and fascinating hospitality.

From Washington we went to Boston, Massachusetts, the tradi-

tional centre of Unitarianism, where our movement's influence is rather more muted than it used to be, owing to the Catholic resurgence. There were once twentyeight Unitarian churches in Boston. Now there are five, some apparently having been sold to Baptists, Catholics, and fundamentalists. The result seems to be that those remaining are very wealthy. Their members still seem able to wield a certain influence through the fact that many of them appear in the Boston Social Register, to which admission is expensive and carefully vetted. Many Unitarians in New England are unashamedly interested in ancestor worship, which gives them a rather different outlook from that of the pioneering twentiethcentury Unitarians of the Middle West. There is more calm gentility about Unitarianism in Boston and more subservience to the past. The only gentleman I met in America during the hot season wearing a waistcoat was a distinguished Unitarian in Boston! He looked as though he had just stepped out of Jermyn Street-an appearance which would probably carry little weight in Nebraska. The new England churches are most attractive. One young minister I met did not find it easy to persuade his congregation to accept newcomers with Jewish names or come to terms with the "new"

Unitarianism. The older churches are richly caparisoned and superbly maintained. The future of Unitarianism in the Boston area seemed to me much more of an enigma than elsewhere, although in the much more progressive and pioneering areas further west, it is enigmatic enough.

The influential Old South Church in Boston, which is Congregationalist, has a richness of plant and premises which makes our Arlington Street Church look poor by comparison. I was taken to see it as an example of what Unitarians have to compete against in order to attract religiously uncommitted Bostonians.

A good church kitchen is an advantage in America. We were also taken to see the First Church in Plymouth, "America's oldest Protestant Church." This, no doubt for "historical" and tourist reasons, seems to be more comprehensive in its Christian outlook. I can scarcely imagine a humanist being appointed there. Again one was struck by the solid richness of the place. In Plymouth we were entertained to a "clambake" on the beach. This, we found, involved eating rather messy clams followed by a whole lobster for each of us, thrown in by an anonymous donor by way of added excitement! It was all very enjoyable.

Participation and Democracy

A Unitarian Organizational Problem

DALE DEWITT

NITARIANISM has historically held a unique position as a free religion. The inherent or implicit faith of the Unitarians from its beginning was not doctrinal but methodological. The right to free, objective study of the Bible, rather than the denial of the divinity of Jesus which emerged from such study, was the essential point at the beginning. So throughout, until the Western Conference issue in this country and until the official addi-

tion to the bylaws of the American Unitarian Association of the words "individual freedom of belief is inherent in the Unitarian tradition," this essential point has been maintained.

Similarly the congregational form of organization, the only one in keeping with freedom of belief, has a distinctive place with us. But congregational polity as a description for Unitarianism is not entirely adequate. The potential genius of our operational form

lies not alone in congregational authority but in the idea of democratic participation, the idea that churches act together in association positively rather than independently. It is the idea that operations begin at the church level and move upward rather than simply authorizing a temporary operation from the top down with occasional checks. This is what is behind the steps of association by churches and fellowships into conferences, then regions, and then the national level organizations. We are a movement of voluntary agencies. This is in harmony with the wise recommendations of the Commission of Appraisal in 1936, the result of which has been the extraordinary expansion of recent years. The idea is established in the declaration resolution of 1936 on "The Nature and Scope of the Association." (Page 12 of the 1958-59 Unitarian Yearbook.) Here it is stated:

In associating themselves the individual churches and societies abrogate no part of their independent autonomy; neither does the Association have any authority over other conferences or associations of Unitarian churches having lesser geographical scope. The Association is, nevertheless, competent to undertake such functions in behalf of the entire body of associated

churches as these churches, by delegates assembled, may from time to time commit to it.

It has responsibility for promoting the unity and harmony of the entire movement, but, until further advised by its experience, will confine itself to recommending to these societies for voluntary adoption such undertakings and methods in their respective fields as it judges to be in the minds of the fellowships.

The above is, as nearly as can be extracted, the essence of the Unitarian organizational basis or philosophy. It means primarily that the American Unitarian Association (and this applies with other agencies) is not a governing body but a service organization. This distinction is important, so important that many of our difficulties in Unitarianism, over the years, have arisen from temporarily forgetting it.

These comments are background for a brief discussion here of some current events in Unitarianism. When in February, 1957, suddenly Frederick May Eliot was lost to our fellowship, the Board of Directors of the Association faced a problem without precedent. The advice of the legal counsel was that the Board must nominate a candidate for the presidency at a special meeting who would stand for election in May. The Board met and made its nomination.

Before this meeting the chairman of the Board asked the regional directors of the Association to meet and then bring to the Board their judgment based on sentiment as found in the field. As regards possible nominees there was no clear guidance from the field. Letters were relatively few and were hardly indicative of attitudes. The regional directors brought a variety of suggestions from individuals, apart from letters. After nearly five hours of discussion and comparing notes, the regional directors presented a report stating:

It is our hope that a nominee for President of the A.U.A. will be proposed with the thought in mind that a reorganizational program for the Association will be undertaken during the next three years. The response from our respective regions indicates a demand for this and we believe it is bound to occur whether or not merger is consummated. We believe, further, that one phase of any reorganization will most likely include a redefinition of the office of the presidency.

The group then presented nine names which had varying degrees of support and suggested that four of these were specially equipped by experience and ability for the

post under these circumstances. The Board made its nomination from the four on the basis of the reorganization recommendation. It then appointed a committee of three: Rev. Thaddeus B. Clark of St. Louis, a Board member, Mrs. Paul Caskey of Rockford, Ill., a former Board member, and Rev. Dale DeWitt, Regional Director for the Middle Atlantic States, chairman. The committee was asked to report at the October Board meeting on proposals for reorganization and with suggested bylaw changes to implement these proposals. The report was made at that time, but with very small margin of time for the members to consider the contents. The agenda of the Board included, besides the usual divisional reports and business, the Beacon Press Special Committee report, the Development Fund report, the Merger Commission report, and the Reorganization Committee report. Much time was necessarily devoted to the Beacon Press report. The merger and development reports were briefly presented. The Board was able to devote little more than an hour-and-a-half to the Reorganization report, approving one point (abolition of the Biennial General Conference and holding the annual meeting on alternate years outside of Massachusetts), evincing some skepticism about limiting further the

number of delegates to the annual meetings, and only opened up the discussion of the A.U.A. presidency. The report is scheduled for further discussion at the February Board meeting and the Board is under a mandate from the 1958 May Meetings to send the findings of the committee to all the churches and fellowships. The report itself was written to the Board of Directors and not, as the committee would have wished, for general distribution. It stated:

The changes in organizational structure recommended by this committee are aimed primarily at obtaining the kind of effective administrative service that will bring the work of the Association closer to church life, and provide greater democratic participation.... The presentation is intended to make clear the changes proposed by our committee and the reasons involved. The bylaw changes as here proposed are for clarity of content and not necessarily in final form for action by the annual meet-

The first proposal was to reduce the number of national meetings by eliminating the General Conference, and to hold alternate annual meetings away from Massachusetts. Counsel was instructed to prepare an appropriate bylaw for action at the next May Meetings. The second proposal was to limit the number of delegates to the annual meetings for membership above six hundred, basing representation on churches and fellowships as institutions rather than on numbers. The purpose in mind, more important than the method, was to have a smaller and better prepared delegate body.

The third proposal was for a division of the functions now held in the presidency of the A.U.A. and the purpose of the change was stated as the strengthening of both the religious and administrative leadership. It was proposed that the President, a minister, be elected for a two-year term, on either partial or full leave of absence from his church on terms to be negotiated in each instance. His duties would be to act as chairman of the Board of Directors, be a member of all departmental and standing committees, excepting the Nominating Committee; to be considered the religious head of Unitarianism in North America. and to represent the churches on public occasions and in fraternal relations with other religious bodies.

It was recommended that there be two Vice-Presidents, elected for two years each. From these, nominations for President might be made.

The appointment of an Administrative Director was proposed.

As the chief executive officer of the Association, his duties would be to correlate the work of all departments of the A.U.A. and to direct its administrative activities. He would be appointed by the A.U.A. Board for an indefinite period and be subject to dismissal by the Board.

It was recommended that the Moderator be a layman, elected for two years, and his duties be to preside at annual meetings.

A recommendation was made that nine members of the Board be nominated by the nine regions to serve as their direct representatives on the Board.

In respect to the Nominating Committee, it was proposed that each region elect one member for three years and that the A.U.A. Board elect three members for four years.

A further proposal was made that the Commission on Planning and Review be renamed, that its function be restated, and that it be constituted differently. The new name would be the Commission on Review and Recommendation. It should review the work of the Association and recommend concerning its improvement. A plan was offered whereby its members would be people experienced in denominational affairs and a mandate given it to secure the results of meetings of denominational affairs chairmen in order to better formulate the concerns and interests of churches and fellowships.

A bylaw was proposed by which the Association would recognize regional organizations if these organizations so requested.

The above points involved bylaw changes. A second section of the report offered considerations not requiring bylaw action. In this section a department of research was recommended; leadership in voluntary coordination of all Unitarian activities was urged; regional autonomy was supported; reassessment of the internal departmental organization of the A.U.A. was recommended; a plan of travel equalization was offered; and greater communication between the A.U.A. Board and the churches was urged.

The proposals for bylaw changes have followed the intent of greater democracy and participation, and in terms of these purposes should be discussed and the delegates to annual meetings should be given an opportunity to act favorably or otherwise. It would seem the part of wisdom for the Board to recommend that those proposals they can approve be acted upon at the 1959 annual meeting and that the others be given another year of discussion. Doubtless the most serious problem dealt with by the committee was that of administration and religious leadership. There has been considerable discussion in this field on the part of lay people and ministers for a number of years. The idea will probably continue to arise from time to time, and certainly the basic point of it should be given to the denomination for decision in the near future.

The basis of the committee's presentation on the change in the presidency was to achieve three ends. One was to obtain fuller and more representative religious leadership. Another, to make possible greater attention to the administrative affairs than is now possible. Possibly even more important was the intent to solve an organizational anomaly wherein the administration has no relation of direct responsibility to the Board of Directors; also wherein the administrative function is inevitably subordinate to the religious leadership qualities which give a candidate for the presidency the prestige needed to secure votes.

In the nature of the case now the President must, to sustain his prestige and influence, travel widely and frequently among the churches throughout the land, carry a heavy load of speaking engagements, and make appearances at many public functions. He must do this also if he is to give the denomination the religious leadership it needs. Our fellowship would gain immeasur-

ably if the functions of religious leadership could be carried on without the burdens of an everenlarging administrative problem. It is intended that opportunity would be provided for distinguished ministers to give their leadership as President, and it would be hoped that by more frequent change a variety of religious emphasis might be represented, truly reflecting the pluralistic character of our movement. The religious leadership of the denomination should not be subject to the pressures and tensions which beset the presidency because of certain political problems involving administration. The presidency as a long career post, and under its present conception has, at least in the case of the past three incumbents, invoked controversy, opposition, and efforts toward unseating them. These situations have been costly to our movement.

The organizational structure we have—quite unusual for a voluntary body—wherein the President is responsible to the electorate but not to the Board of Directors, has always led either to a diminished and less effective role on the part of the elected Board or to disagreements on policy and frustrations of policy. Those closest to the affairs of the Association have been aware and are aware of the tensions and failures involved. It

is far more serious than the members of our churches and fellowships realize. This situation is fair neither to the President nor the Board.

With these and many other problems in mind the reorganization committee offered a plan creating an office of administrative director, whose incumbent would be appointed by, and responsible to, a more specifically representative Board of Directors. Such a director could be drawn from the lay field or the ministerial field. Not only the rapid growth of Unitarianism but the potential for the future-altogether the servicing needs of our congregationsmake it important that we have the services of a person for administration who is well equipped to give us the best possible direction. We should spare neither money nor effort to obtain this.

Unless we do, we may well fail to measure up to our extraordinary opportunity.

It would be very unfortunate if the proposals for reorganization were not considered carefully and on their merits, apart from personalities. The problems involved are practical organizational problems. They are to be decided, if we are wise, by careful thought rather than emotion or consideration of past custom. It is for this reason that the suggestion is made here that the changes approved by the A.U.A. Board be submitted for action at the next May meetings and that those more difficult to decide be submitted in May 1960. But certainly these issues of organizational life are important enough that all our congregations should have an opportunity to act upon them.

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How Important Is Freedom?

EDITH HANSEN

EFORE Dr. Romulo Betancourt, one-time democratic president of Venezuela, returned to his liberated country from his American exile, he was honored at a dinner by the Inter-American Association for Democracy and Freedom. He there expressed his conviction about the importance of freedom in Latin America: "We must never relinquish the greatest fruit of our extraordinary human community, which is liberty. If as we all desire, we would preserve and defend it, it is necessary to seriously reflect on the best ways of doing so."

How important is liberty for liberal-minded citizens of the United States? Is it our "greatest fruit" which we must never relinquish? What place must it have in our convictions of values in order that we may not unconsciously relinquish it?

Liberty is a collective value, including all the fundamental freedoms. Freedom for the human spirit is important because freedom of the human spirit is important. Freedom of the human spirit is a state of the individual human being, potential or achieved, which is inadequately understood

scientifically, but is vividly realized by many persons who experience it. To be alive, well, free in spirit, and able to use one's abilities in freely chosen meaningful ways is heaven on earth. Or if one is handicapped, frustrated, or burdened, a free spirit can nevertheless find creative responsibility in emphasizing spiritual values. Even just to keep faith in life and thereby to encourage others to keep and build faith is important. Is not the consciousness of freedom and responsibility the consummation of humanness? And since personal responsibility is genuine and complete only when willingly assumed, freedom is the primary value. Is not freedom of the human spirit, for its own sake, the supreme human value? Is not the free human spirit even more important than any of its creations? And who in all the world in any age have been more fortunate in opportunities for experiencing this consummation of humanness than twentieth century American liberals? The sufferings of some American liberals in behalf of freedom emphasize the marvelous good fortune of most. Surely we would not relinquish the liberty which makes possible the free human spirit.

Yet some of our most conscientious and sensitive liberals have tended, it seems to me, to do just that. Some, for members of their organizations, in contacts with citizens of Communist nations or of underdeveloped countries, advocate a policy of silence concerning liberty. Some go further, advocating neutrality of attitude toward Communism. All of them believe that it is futile to talk of liberty before world living standards are raised. Some feel that talk of liberty intensifies international antagonisms and obstructs peace. Loyalty to liberty, they say, should be demonstrated within one's own country. Likewise, criticism of government should be limited to our own, for which we are responsible. With people of other countries and toward their governments we should show a maximum of sympathy and appreciation. Peace, rather than freedom, is now of common world interest. Some feel that it is inconsistent for us to emphasize liberty in contacts with people of other countries while freedom is seriously and extensively violated in our own country. Convictions of these liberals regarding Communism differ. Some are convinced that Communism is fundamentally wrong because of its inherent dictatorship. Some have concluded that Communism may

be the only way by which material improvement can come to underprivileged peoples and that internal pressures will in time bring fundamental freedoms. Between these radically different viewpoints are graduations of compromise with Communism. The persons holding these attitudes are generous, sympathetic, and devoted to ethical and humanitarian ideals and goals. Their personal loyalty to freedom is great and true, and some of them have been severely tested. Perhaps every one of them feels that for himself it is of first importance.

When an American research scientist discovers and demonstrates what seems to him to be a scientific truth, if it is of vital universal importance, he feels an obligation to make it widely known. His discovery and demonstration are more than a personal achievement, more than a national advantage. Geneticists who are convinced that atomic radiation threatens the biological integrity of the human race feel it their duty to emphasize this finding continuously. American liberals have experienced a truth of universal and enduring value. They know how much freedom of the human spirit can mean to a human being. The liberty which makes their experience possible is more than a personal blessing, more than an achievement of

Western nations. It is a universal value.

If freedom of the human spirit is of first importance, it is always of first importance. If it seems sometimes not of first importance, then, as an enduring, intrinsic, universal value, it can not be considered to be ever of first importance. If it can be sacrificed temporarily for some other value or values, its status is continuously precarious in one's own consciousness. In a democratic country, when liberty is limited by restrictions necessary for public safety or for right treatment of all citizens, we accept these limitations. Reasonable restrictions are not denials of the free spirit. They are only such limitations as we would place upon ourselves in the spirit of responsibility which is a necessary accompaniment of freedom as a universal value. But we examine governmental restrictions to determine whether there may be denial of the free spirit. Intelligent protest or resistance against such denial helps us to keep hold of liberty and to maintain freedom of spirit in its place of first importance. Freedom is secure only in the hearts of persons who love it supremely and who continuously make that love known. In contacts with persons of Communist or underdeveloped countries, we can give our testimony in friendly manner. We can not know the ul-

timate effects of our testimony. It may contribute in some infinitesimal way to the valuing of freedom of the human spirit and to progress of liberty. Those who hear it will know that we value liberty highly, that freedom of the human spirit is for us an essential need. Also, it may somehow reach some lonely person who values freedom supremely, but is discouraged. In giving it, we are expressing our spiritual support of all active advocates of liberty everywhere and of all who have been active and are consequently in prison or exile, of all who have sacrificed life for their loyalty.

To the cause of freedom in Latin America we can give more effective support than is possible in most parts of the world. "Today, we can state," said Dr. Betancourt, "that the majority of Latin American governments are of democratic orientation respecting the fundamental liberties." Many Latin Americans whose first loyalty has been to spiritual freedom and political liberty have died, and many more have suffered, in this achievement. Yet the achievement is not now permanently secure. Dr. Betancourt believes that "the establishment of a vast civilian front is the best guarantee of survival for democratic regimes in countries where dictatorship no longer exists." The help of the United States is needed for the continuing

advancement of democracy in Latin America. Interested and informed American liberals can express their opinions to members
of Congress and to the Executive
Branch concerning our responsibilities. "There must be concrete
inter-American economic accord,"
Dr. Betancourt emphasized especially, in order that well-being
and stability may reach "the vast
urban and rural masses." "This
would be a definite way of establishing democracy."

It is acutely important for us to try to understand economic principles essential for the survival of political liberty. The February, 1958, bulletin of the American Humanist Association, Free Mind, reported that a major concern of the Indian Radical Humanist Movement is the reconciliation of planning and freedom. Surely it is as important for us to study reconciliation of economics and freedom. There is no reason for complacency. There has never yet been general well-being in the United States. Can there ever be general well-being in a large democratic country? We can not know yet. But every American liberal has a particular responsibility to try to help make general economic well-being in democratic countries possible. We can be loyal to fundamental freedoms all our adult lives and yet unconsciously relinquish liberty through insufficient concern about the dilemmas of total material wellbeing versus individual freedom.

Can a single or a completely planned economy ever be compatible with freedom of the human spirit? I do not see how. Political liberty is essential for freedom of the human spirit. Political liberty is possible only when people may express their wills about economic systems. A mixed economy is the only kind of economy in which people of different viewpoints can agitate for acceptance of their views. It is the only kind of economy in which majorities may change their minds, in which majorities may express their will for shifts in amount and kinds of government planning and control. It is the only kind of economy in which cooperative movements can develop and in which capitalism changes its character under public pressure. If we value freedom of the human spirit for its own sake and if we want increasing numbers of persons to experience this supremely human state of being, we must cooperate in creative efforts to bring material well-being to all people by means of democratic politicoeconomic systems. We should do this also for humanitarian reasons. No free spirit can be really happily free when fellow human beings are in want.

Teaching Morals in the Public School*

WILLIAM H. KILPATRICK

of morals in the public school that I am here to discuss and because so many Americans think of morality as based solely on religion, we are at once brought face to face with the historic American doctrine of the separation of church and state. If time were not a factor, we could begin with Jefferson and Madison and the "wall of separation" they built between church and states. But because our problems belong to the present, it may be better to begin with more recent developments.

ECAUSE it is the teaching

Since 1947 there have been three explicit decisions on the separation of church and state given by the United States Supreme Court. In the New Jersey bus case Mr. Justice Hugo Black, speaking for the Court, said: "No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institution, whatever they may be called or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion." This conclusion was repeated in 1948 ("The McCollum Case"). In 1952,

But in spite of this clear decision that no tax money shall be used to support any religious activities we still find what seem like clear violations of the Supreme Court decision by certain public school authorities. In 1951 the New York State Regents, which control the public schools of the state, said, to be sure by way of advice not command: "We believe that at the commencement of each school day the act of allegiance to the flag might well be joined with this act of reverence to God: 'Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessing upon us, our parents, our teachers and our country."

In 1953 the Board of Education of New York City expressed its desire "to fulfill the objectives of the Regents" and passed a resolution that the daily Pledge of Allegiance be followed by the singing in unison of the fourth stanza of

in another released-time case, the decision included the words: "We follow the McCollum case." With these three successive decisions holding to the same effect, we can say that the principle as above worded is now settled so far as we can foresee.

^{*}Address delivered at the American Humanist Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, March 1, 1958.

America:

Our Father's God to Thee
Author of liberty,
To Thee we sing:
Long may our land be bright
With Freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King.

It passes belief how any school official can fail to see that this daily "act of reverence to God" directly contradicts the decision of the Supreme Court as quoted earlier. It is not only school officials who thus defy the Supreme Court, but the government in Washington puts the phrase "In God We Trust" on coins and stamps. How anyone can reconcile these acts with the Supreme Court decision above quoted lies beyond my comprehension. To the aforementioned we could add the long time practice of Congress, each house, to open its sessions with a prayer delivered by an appointed Chaplain. Again tax money, so far as I can see, is being used to support religion.

Still again, some among us demand that our schools teach "about" religion, counting that it has been an essential factor both in our history and in our present culture. If there is no intent by this to support religion, then it can be defended under some circumstances; for example, honest inquiry as to facts or meaning. But one group urging this proposal in-

cluded the clause that teaching "about" religion shall be done in such a way as "to stimulate the young toward a vigorous personal reaction to the challenge of religion." This sounds to me more like teaching religion than teaching "about" it.

However, teaching "about" religion, if honestly and critically conducted, could be a very valuable help towards building an effective philosophy of life in those old enough to conduct honest critical study. But opposition would have to be expected. Fundamentalists would object to a comparison between the biblical accounts of "creation" and what geology and evolutionary biology have to tell us. Also if the Bible itself were studied in high school or college as the "higher critics" in many modern theological seminaries actually study it, many would object that religion was not being studied but was being attacked. Catholics would perhaps similarly object to a study of the Spanish inquisition or to pre-Luther sale of indulgences.

Similarly, many fundamentalists and others will object to any thoughtful discussion of the natural origin of morals. Probably in our country a popular antagonism would be great enough in many localities to prevent any high school study of this natural origin of morals, even though cur-

rent anthropology would support it.

We now come to the actual teaching of morals under typical public school conditions. For the youngest, the words used have to be very simple and very clear: Always tell the truth; Always behave fairly; Do not take what belongs to somebody else; Do not hurt another person. Through the process of living together under proper teacher guidance the meanings of the words, truth, fairly, belongs to, and hurt, will gradually take on clearer and clearer meaning. Equally important, even more so, is building the individual's disposition to do these things in actual life. Each individual has to build his own disposition on this point. We can help him, but we cannot force it upon him. Two steps, it seems fair to say, constitute the teaching of morals: (1) understanding what is right; (2) building the commitments to doing the recognized right. The teacher has to keep at these two items all the time. For the first, group discussion will perhaps generally be best; for the second, individual talk will perhaps prove most effective. The more we can succeed with both, the better the final results. These two together constitute the best known way to build worthy and thoughtful character. It is upon such procedure, carried on month after month.

and year after year, that we must and can depend to develop sound and worthy individual character.

An essential part of the desirable character includes standards of action, standards used by the individual in deciding what is right to do in the various situations that arise in the individual's life. In fact, for any particular case of moral doubt as to what to do, the standard one uses in the judging is the crux of the act of judging.

Some will say that there are too many different individual standards; that in result there is no common moral standard, as long as we depend on man in such matters. But there is more to be said. Men can and do confer, and common judgments are reached. Franz Boaz, in his Mind of Primitive Man (1938), counted that early man reached his common conclusions by a "trial-and-error" method with the results that the tribal code of ethics was "everywhere the same: Murder, theft, lying, rape were condemned."

This was primitive man, but civilization has a wider code of ethics. Not all obey the recognized code; but here in America, while there are many failures to follow the recognized standards, there are still recognized standards to use in bringing up our school youth. Americans may differ as to what source gives ultimate

authority to morals; but the standards as to what youth should do are fairly widely known and accepted.

Let us come to the actual teaching of morals in the public school. Several things can be said with fair certainty.

First, the general aim must be the building of all-round character, character sensitive to the rights and feelings of others, character committed to supporting the common good, character led by a capable and well-informed intelligence.

Second, the procedure must be based on the present best-known teaching-learning principles: (1) that *learn* means to build a new behavior into one's character; (2) that the method of doing this is personally accepted behavior, behaving inwardly and outwardly by one's own acceptance of what is to be learned; learning in and through wholehearted current living.

Third, in all of this the teacher serves as the friendly guide to the worthy wholehearted living. The pupils will thus learn what they live to the degree that, under teacher guidance, they make it their own. Perhaps as to what to do, the best single procedure is, as suggested above, a teacher-led class discussion as the group tries to decide in some actual situation what is wise and right to do. Pupils are very sensitive to what other pupils think. To discuss thoughtfully and constructively, under wise teacher guidance, and so to decide and then so act-this is the typical procedure for group projects. For personal lapses, as earlier suggested, a private teacherchild talk seems the best thing. There is much more that could be said, but I shall have to let it go at what I have so far said.

There is no part of education more important than building morality.

"In spite of the great importance we attach to the triumphs of knowledge and achievement, it is nevertheless obvious that only a humanity which is striving after ethical ends can in full measure share in the blessings brought by material progress and become master of the dangers which accompany it."

Albert Schweitzer.

BOOKMAN'S NOTEBOOK

CHARLES W. PHILLIPS

POTPOURRI IN A HURRY

In a really sudden flash, the opportunity came to us to get ready for a three-week trip to the Middle East over the Christmas holidays. There was barely enough time to get details cared for, even working fast, so this review has to be miscellaneous in various things read, and not built around any theme.

It occurs to us first to comment on Oscar Riddle's The Unleashing of Evolutionary Thought. The Darwin year-centennial of the publication of the Origin of Species in May 1859—and there will be a lot of noise about it from now on. In fact, Life has begun a good series. The reason for commenting on Riddle's book has to do with the circumstances of its publishing. Riddle is a distinguished biologist who has a recognized position in his specialty. He had trouble getting this book published, however. Various publishers turned it down, including Harpers, Knopf, and our own Beacon. We have it on "reliable authority" that Riddle felt Beacon had given it to some theist editor who gave it a bad time. If that kind of word came to us, it must have gotten, or be on its way, to others, and the attitude of possible prejudice inserts its head. Riddle put several thousand dollars into the publication.

Our judgment is that whoever read it at Beacon, or elsewhere, probably wanted a much more distinguished book on its list for the Darwin year than this one. There are lots of good things in it, and the author has more than a little gift for epigrammatic statement which is sometimes quite good. Our objections to it, however, lie in two areas:

1. He beats a dead horse too much.

2. He is fuzzy in defining both science and religion, and hence confuses more than clarifies the relationship between the two.

As to the first, Riddle finds evolution had a hard time getting accepted as to either idea or fact, and still does in some quarters, which he notes. This is, of course, true and we could add more instances of it, many of which we confidently expect to remain around for the foreseeable future. Why I would not know, but there are still Amish Dutch who refuse to plow without a horse. Our only point is that true as the fact is that obscurantism is still around, the main type of warfare of science with religion that excites him is over. It was really done in England when Darwin got buried in Westminster Abbey, and in this country by the time Andrew Dickson White got through writing. Dayton, Tennessee, got on the map on this in 1926 but that was (really when you dig into it) a side-show performance. The late Pius XII removed all practical barriers to the teaching of the doctrine as long as one says the right theological words about

"soul" and "original creation."

For the life of us, we cannot see why a liberal wants to waste time berating the yokels. Not when at least the full significance of the relation between science and religion has so much constructive work to be done yet. Oftentimes Riddle has a simplistic equation of evolution with "progress" in more or less typical late nineteenth century terms. Evolution means simply "change" and "mutability of form and species" which was, and is, of massive impact. But there may be "devolution"—going down-as well as a going up. Further, in between the two great trends, within change, there is a possibility of "stasis," for some species seem to have achieved essentially that for tremendous timespans. Something like that, incidentally, was predicted for the human species in Seidenberg's Posthistoric Man, which we reviewed in this column last year.

At any rate Riddle does nothing with the deep issues raised by evolutionary theory itself, and gets thinner when he deals with science. His treatment of religion does not raise it an iota beyond a kind of ethicism. Religion may not dare sink below that, but it

is surely more.

Riddle is an avowed "humanist" which is all right, just so Humanism does not rest in this. And for the significance of Darwin on modern thought, John Dewey is still the man to read.

Better than Riddle in his Darwin section is Jacques Barzun's Darwin, Marx, and Wagner. (Doubleday Anchor, \$.95.) Barzun is more than a little critical of Darwin. Since Barzun is a well-es-

tablished liberal, this is bound to prick up one's ears. The burden of it is – the criticism i.e. – that Darwin was a little too innocent. He might have recognized the debts he owed to others a bit more, and been more of a competitor than he was. Probably even a deeper reason is that, while Darwin was a superb observer, classifier, and indefatigable man of patience, he was not a first-rate thinker, and so is partly responsible for some of the nineteenth century abuses in social policy, for which evolution was made the sanction. Maybe Barzun overdoes this a bit, or is unfair to Darwin. In any case, it is true that "the survival of the fittest" supported the worst of nineteenth century imperialism, and some very bad social malpractice.

Together with essays on Marx, and Wagner in the same book, Barzun goes on to hammer the whole concept of mechanism and fatalism that imbued these men, for all their idealism otherwise. Barzun's is a liberal protest on

behalf of freedom.

There are three significant new books in the general area of the freedom of the press. One is not specifically on that, but has important bearing. We shall first mention Beacon's Tide without Turning, by John Gill (literally, Starr King) at \$4.50. It is the biography of Elijah Lovejoy, pioneer newspaper editor in Illinois, who lost his life defending his press, and his right to publish his anti-slavery views. This is good reading, and a good book. Many an adult will like it, and, further, it could and should be used, one would think, with youth. We are

very much in need of these things and others like Bainton's *Hunted Heretic* — biography of Servetus. Freedom may indeed have to be won anew in each generation, but it helps each one to get some inspiration from individuals in the past who put their lives where their convictions were.

The University of Chicago Press has brought out anew William Ernest Hocking's book, Freedom of the Press, at \$3.00. This is a report of a study by a distinguished commission and first published in 1947. Hocking is a champion of freedom. He understands, good philosopher that he is, that freedom is never complete nor unconditioned. Upon behalf of freedom and responsibility, he threads his way through all of the major areas involved. Anyone contemplating a sermon next year when the Council of Liberal Churches wants us to keep a "Freedom of the Press" Sunday, and who has already done a memorial service on Lovejoy on such an occasion, could well get much from this. Likewise also from the University of Chicago's Ideas Have Consequences, by Richard Weaver, at something like \$1.50. This is a close-out of a hardback book. From the beginning, it is oriented philosophically, although it has much to do with the mass media of communication. Judging from the kinds of headlines written and which move men, and the apparent theory behind them, Weaver wonders if modern man is a moron. He develops the thesis that the ultimate protection of freedom lies in the area of a man's having a standard of values.

Two of our parishioners got to Charles Francis Potter's The Lost Years of Jesus Revealed before we did (Gold Medal paperback at \$.50), and practically bludgeoned us into reading it. Potter is, of course, a grand old man of a sharper school of liberal writing on behalf of interpreting the Bible to the public as the scholars have revealed it. Here he is concerned mainly with the Dead Sea Scrolls and their significance. He claims that they have tremendous significance, and that there is almost an organized conspiracy upon the part of orthodoxy to keep the real facts from the public. This thesis he carries back to the whole apocryphal and pseudepigraphical literature.

True, men like Millar Burrows do a good job of soft-pedalling, and more than one minister has learned better in school, but still acts as if, or preaches as if, Moses wrote the Pentateuch. We doubt if there is any downright venality about it. The problem lies in the realm of the psychology of religion. We remember being exposed way back in college to R. H. Charles' work on the intertestamentary materials-all of them. Potter makes much of these. But ecclesiasticism smothers insights more by dead weight than by knifing. As Henry J. Cadbury put it a few years back, "we always did know of the essential Jewishness of Jesus, but if people did not want to accept it then, they will not with just more evidence." However, if Potter's book is a revelation to Unitarians and is a means of stimulating prying into Biblical literature, why look a gift horse in the mouth? Promote it.

Western Unitarian Conference

700 Oakwood Boulevard, Chicago 53, Illinois

ELLSWORTH M. SMITH, Executive Secretary_

Communication, Organization, and Merger

Someone asked me the other night: "Isn't yours a pretty big job-how do you get away from your parish enough to do justice to it?" . . . At least three-quarters of the members of our Western Conference churches are new to Unitarianism. . . . Probably half the 22,000 Unitarians in our region have no knowledge of the Conference. . . . There are many churches and fellowships which for years have not had any members at Lake Geneva or Estes or the Conference annual meetings. . . . Recently there were sixteen leaders in a meeting in Chicago, from all over the Conference area, and five of them had no knowledge of the church finance counselling service offered through Allied Fund Raising Counsellors, in spite of the fact that four blanket mailings had gone out to every church and fellowship. . . . Very few of our societies have active denominational affairs committees. . . . What we are getting at is a very great need for communication and information.

What we need is a publications committee for the Western Conference. This committee would arrange for publication of a newsletter, which ideally should go out in quantity to all the churches and fellowships for inclusion in their own newsletter mailings.

(Actually, a trial issue of such a newsletter, called The Western Unitarian, is written and waiting to be printed.) There might be a bulletin service to ministers, fellowship chairmen, and church officers containing important information not of immediate interest to all our members. Such a committee could also publish an annual report of Western Conference activities and/or a yearly directory for the Conference. There should be a bulletin describing the services available through the Conference and the eight area councils. Such a committee could engage high-level skills and make them available in layout and format for all the kinds of announcements and promotion we do. Finally, we might actually publish in pamphlet form some of the significant addresses and presentations made at our assemblies and conferences.

The source of strength in Unitarianism is in the intelligent and devoted participation of the Unitarian and his family in the local church and fellowship. He is convinced of the significance of his local group and feels personally rewarded for his contributions. More and more individual Unitarians are extending their participation to regional and continental denominational affairs. They take with them to these broader en-

deavors the orientation of the local group. There are vigorous regional and continental services. Each lends strength to the others. The local society is congregationally governed and is not bound in any way that threatens its independence. The regions likewise are autonomous organizations that vote to cooperate with the continental American Unitarian Association. The regions are a voluntary association of churches and fellowships that decide individually to affiliate together for common ends. The continental Association is made up directly of individual societies (not regions) and has its own freedom and untrammeled autonomy. The individual societies vote the programs and services of the regions and of the continental. The local church or fellowship is a service organization and so are the regional and continental organizations.

What we have in the American Unitarian movement, then, is a cooperating constellation of free societies whose purpose is service and fellowship and which can govern only on the infrequent occasions when the members specifically grant the right in their own interest. No such organization can be perfect. Perfection in organization requires a conformity which would throttle our spirit. An organization, however, expressing liberal religious values, can have and does have more vitality and creativeness than a more closely controlled organization. In a religious association in which the individual is free, the fine strengths of voluntariness are more appropriate and effective than the efficiency of authority.

We have nine regional organizations within the American Unitarian Association. They are selfdetermining. The Report of the Committee on Reorganization, when it is published, will recommend that for the first time the bylaws of the AUA include a sentence recognizing the regions as functioning parts of the whole.

Just as churches are different and the theological climate in different parts of the country is different, so the regions are different. At the present time, all the regions raise more than enough money for denominational support to maintain their own operations and still contribute to the AUA. Some of the regions want either to stay small or to subdivide in order to become again small enough to be served in general administrative ways by a single secretary and his office staff. Others of the regions, notably the Southern New England Unitarian Council and the Western Unitarian Conference, are embarked upon the process of building up multiple professional field services within their regions. The Southern New England Council is applying to the United Unitarian Appeal for an associate secretary to supplement the work of its executive. The Western Conference has such a proposal high on its priority list, along with a full-time Religious Education person and a person to direct specialized services for fellowships. So far, the Western Conference is the only region to employ a professional fund-raiser to counsel with its churches and fellowships about their financial structures and potentials and to conduct our UUA effort. When

the report is in, we will see how many local societies have expressed great satisfaction with this specialized service, available nowhere else.

The regional secretaries have a week-long staff meeting each July and meet for a day in Boston each time there are AUA Board Meetings. Dr. Dale DeWitt is the chairman of this group and Reverend Clifton Hoffman is the secretary. There is as yet no name for this group. The regional secretaries feel that the divergent patterns developing in the regions are good and that they will teach us more than conformity ever could.

There was held in Boston last May what has turned out to be the first in a series of annual conferences of representatives of regional Boards of Directors and their secretaries. This can be a very significant contribution to Unitarian organization. At these conferences will be shared the problems of growth and the varieties of programs developed by

the nine regions.

Prior to each set of Board Meetings of the AUA the secretaries of the regional organizations meet for a solid chunk of time with President Dana Greeley of the AUA and some of the AUA staff people. The secretaries of regional organizations make to the Board of the AUA a single, joint, mimeographed-and-mailed report at irregular intervals. There is as yet no regularized reporting of individual regional organizations to the continental Association.

It is obvious to those who work at denominational concerns that there is a multiplicity of channels, not too well coordinated, deficient at some points, but which is made to serve us all well by the excellent good will and the dedication to the common good of everyone involved. To the uninitiated it would seem that we have wheels within wheels, and it is probably a fact that we would suffer more from an overstructuring of "jurisdictions" or "lines of authority" than from the impromptu nature of some of our present procedures.

There will be held, for two days in March, a retreat of the continental and regional staffs. Again—it is not written in the bylaws but we do it because it seems important and because it promises real gains in understanding and

cooperation.

We should all watch for the Report of the Committee on Reorganization which will be published shortly after the meetings in February by the AUA Board, for local study and continental decision at the May Meetings this Spring. Precious little time for so important an action! (See article by Dale DeWitt in this issue.)

* * *

I am in favor of national Merger, on certain conditions. The bulk of support for Merger is believed to be within the area of the Western Conference. Yet there are many Western Conference Unitarians and Unitarians elsewhere who are conscientiously opposed to Merger. There are many Universalists opposed to Merger.

I am in favor of Merger because I believe quite simply that the coming together of two so similar liberal, non-creedal religious denominations is a natural and good thing. I believe further